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Merkel, Italian president discuss political deadlock



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (R) greets Italian President Giorgio Napolitano on his arrival at the Chancellery in Berlin

BERLIN, Germany (AFP) - German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed confidence in Italian politicians' "sense of responsibility" after inconclusive elections, at a meeting with Italy's president Thursday, her spokesman said.

"The chancellor expressed her confidence in the sense of responsibility of the political forces in Italy who now have to form a government capable of acting in this complex situation," Steffen Seibert said in a written statement.

It was the chancellor's first

comment on this week's Italian elections, albeit through her spokesman.

Merkel also wished Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, who also met his German counterpart Joachim Gauck here, success in carrying out his role in the process of forming a government, Seibert said.

As well as Italy's post-election situation, their talks covered the advancement of the European Union and took place in an "amicable" atmosphere, he added.

The Ecolution and Wubbo Ockels; living an example of a sustainable future



Ecolution under sail

A well known, and well respected personage in Holland, Aruba's government welcomed Professor Wubbo Ockels from TU Delft and Holland's first NASA/ESA astronaut as keynote speaker for the first Green Aruba Conference in 2010. He officially opened the conference with a brief history of his career as an astronaut and the revelation of seeing the earth from space. "We are all passengers on this Spaceship Earth," he told the gathering, "and we must be very conscious of preserving the hull of this spaceship, which is the atmosphere that protects us from the dead nothingness of space."

In the fall of 2010, Professor Ockels was in the process of building the Ecolution, a two-mastered schooner that provides complete freedom and "autonomy through innovation."

He welcomed island media on board for a tour of this revolutionary vessel, whose name, devised by

combining "Ecology" and "revolution," summing up Ockels' dream and philosophy for a sustainable future.

The 26 meter (85 ft) sailboat is completely automated in working the sails, which is powered by batteries distributed throughout the inner deck of the boat. These are charged by the two enormous propellers attached to two

separate engines. While operating under sail power, the rotation of the propellers charge the batteries. Professor Ockels explained this is how they have "complete freedom" from ports, as they use the energy to distill seawater and power the navigational equipments, lights, and galley; it meets all their needs.

Continued on pg 2



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The Ecolution and Wubbo Ockels; living an example of a sustainable future

Continued from pg 1



Dr. Ockels enjoys his onboard disco



The cockpit



Captain's Quarters

There is no need to put into port to refuel. "This is what we have dubbed "Happy energy" he jokes.

The floating home is ele-

gant. The sweeping design of the hull and the flexible masts were done by navel architect Gerard Dykstra. It is very modern, constructed of

steel throughout. The retractable keel provides a relatively shallow draft, allowing the boat to be beached during low tide in more northern latitudes, then re-floated when the tide rises.

The living area measures 60 square meters, (600 square feet) with spacious community areas and master bedroom, with two guest rooms. There are four heads onboard; one with a steam room. The galley sports electric stove, microwave and dishwasher, all running efficiently off the bank of batteries. It is estimated to purchase such a vessel would cost between 4.5 and 5.5 million Euros (around 6.55 million dollars), but the project received multiple sponsorships from environmentally concerned organizations and financial institutions.

"Sustainable living is not a matter of less, but of "it is different," explains Wubbo Ockels.

"It is all about how energy is generated and since Ecolution does it without using fossil fuels, in an environmentally sound manner, you can use it and enjoy the comfort." Every aspect, even the processing of sewage and waste water, has been designed to be of zero impact to the environment.

The crossing of the Atlantic to Aruba was the boat's maiden voyage; it arrived on Sunday, January 20. Professor. Ockels and his wife Yoss were joined by some of his students from the university as crew.

The Aruban government is very proud to host the couple for an extended stay, during which Professor Ockels is lecturing to island youth about the ship, sustainability,

and how they can do their part to secure their future. "When we talk of the future, it is their world, their well-being that is at stake here. They are the ones who will have to deal with the consequences of our actions in 50 years." He is also offering his services as a consultant to the government on sustainability projects. It is the ambition of the present administration for Aruba to be 100% "sustainable" by 2020, and they consider his input, as one of the most active and innovative advocates of renewable energy sources, invaluable.

Ockels and his wife admitted spending their "retirement" sailing around the world has been their dream

since 25 years ago, when during their travels, they observed a couple similar to themselves doing it. "Of course, being me, I had to make something more of it, something bigger; I had to make it a statement for sustainable living."

By Rosalie Klein



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Aura Casino: "Where players win"



Mrs. Maria-Luisa Gonzalez Aura Casino at the Occidental Grand is the place to play right now! The cash prizes are flowing out and happy players are leaving with big smiles on their faces.

Recently, **Mrs. Maria Luisa Gonzalez** was one of



Mrs. Sara Salamoni, who won a total amount of **\$3,016,90,-** at the Aura Casino while playing on the brand new slot machine "Quick Hits."

Mrs. Mrs. Darlene Aument also decided to join the



those happy winners. **Mrs. Gonzalez** found her lucky streak in the newly renovated Aura Casino "where players win."

She won the beautiful amount of **\$3,594,50** while playing on the brand new slot machine "Grydon Gold Deluxe."

Another happy winner

winners. **Mrs. Aument** won a total amount of **\$1,096,40,-** playing the slot machine "Banana King."

And the winning just continues at the Aura Casino as **Mr. James Edwards** also finds his lucky streak in the Casino "where players win".

Mr. Edwards won a total amount of **\$2,000,-** at the

Aura Casino at the Occidental Grand while playing on the brand new slot machine "Bonus Poker."

Mr. Dominique Carinci was also another happy winner after walking away with the nice sum of **\$2,500**, won on the slot machine "Bonus Times."

Not wanting to be left out of the winners circle at the Aura Casino **Mrs. Hope Lacasse** also walked away with winnings summing up to **\$1250,-** won on the slot machine "Bonus Times."

Staff & Management want to congratulate all the lucky winners and invite everyone to come and win at the Aura Casino at the Occidental Grand: "Where players win."

The center of Aruba has definitely shifted here at the Aura Casino, which happens to be smack-dab in the middle of all the action on Palm Beach.

Come and try your luck, maybe you can be one of Aura Casino's next lucky winners!

Street to be named after beloved Dr. Arturo Saladin



Aruba's P.M. Mike Eman announces the honoring of the late Dr. Arturo Saladin

During the recent celebration of the Independence Day of the Dominican Republic here at the newly built Oranjestad Plaza Juan Pablo Duarte, Aruba's Prime Minister announced that the government has decided to honor deceased Dr. Arturo Saladin with a street in his name. At the Juan Pablo Duarte Plaza, Dominicans residing on Aruba gathered to celebrate the National Day of the Dominican Republic.

Dr. Saladin was born in the Dominican Republic, but as a young lad came to Aruba where he grew up. Later, after receiving his training as a medical professional abroad, he returned to Aruba to make his contribution to the island he so loved. Saladin was an outstanding physician and became well-known and much loved by all who knew him. He was loved not only for his great expertise, but especially for his

great heart and affection for people.

According to the Prime Minister, "...our recognition of Dr. Saladin with a street named after him, is a recognition of his great labor and also the labor of the Dominican community on Aruba. Hence, we trust that God would continue to guide and conserve all our Dominican citizens with his love and for your love of the country you've adopted as your own."

The announcement from the Prime Minister was very well received by the Dominican community here. Dr. Saladin was very well loved on Aruba. Aruba was the place where he grew up and a country he loved and where he chose for his final resting place. Many recall Dr. Saladin for his dedication, humor and amiability demonstrated to the Dominican community and to every Aruban.



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Linear Park: A sparkling project for Aruba



Minister Otmar Oduber gives an update on Linear Park

Minister of Tourism, Transport and Labor, Otmar Oduber, was very pleased to announce that after almost 2 years, the Linear Park project will be finished within 2 to 3 weeks.

On Sunday, starting in the morning hours, Santa Rosa will conduct its Market Day on the Plaza Turismo.

The Sports Ministry, together with IBISA (Instituto BIba Salud) – Live Healthy Foundation – is organizing many sports activities to take place on the plaza and also a miniature boat competition in the park.

The project has attracted enormous attention. Total cost was 9 million Aruban florins and the public tender was won by the company Prosuinca, for the amount of 4.8 million Aruban florins.



He explained certain changes were required to construct a park that complies with specific standards. He is firmly convinced it will elevate Aruba's lifestyle and make it more attractive.

The project had a delay of 13 months. On Sunday, March 17, however, it will be inaugurated, just in time for our National Anthem and Flag Day celebration.

Minister Oduber confirmed once again that the project was finished within the amount budgeted, and that it did not cost Aruba one additional cent. Aruba saved 4 million Aruban florins.

There are still some small detail work to be done; a bridge in front of the Nephtali Park which will be connected to a walkway, so the water can flow to the sea. All

this will be finished within 3 weeks. The construction works at Marina Surfside are ready.

The boardwalk that fin-

ishes in front of the Governor's mansion will be finalized within these 3 weeks. Already observers report they can appreciate how beautiful

it will look.

Next week, the LED lights will be switched on and all the old light poles will be removed.

ATENCION

CAP Compania Arubano di Petroleo N.V. ta informa publico en general cu e compania REPSOL lo haci un investigacion di exploracion sismico den lama rond di Aruba.

- E exploracion sismico aki ta tuma luga den cumplimiento di un contract entre REPSOL y CAP a base di articulo 3 y 4 di e "Petroleumverordening zeegebied Aruba".
- E investigacion sismico lo cuminsa dia 15 di februari 2013 y lo dura mas of menos 40 dia.
- E barco sismico SR/V VANTAGE lo rastra un kabel cu un largura di 6 kilometer pa 9 kilometer y un diameter di 6 centimeter na un profundidad di 8 meter pa 10 meter bao di awa.
- Dos otro barco di apoyo OMS RESOLUTION y ELIZABETH-C lo duna sosten logistico na e operacionnan di e investigacion y lo mantene comunicacion cu barconan den e area.
- Tur actividad lo ta na un distancia di mas di 3 kilometer for di costa.
- CAP N.V. ta haci un peticion na tur doño di barco pa coopera pa e investigacion por tuma lugar na un forma sigur y adecuado.

CAP Compania Arubano di Petroleo N.V. brings to the attention of the public in general that the company REPSOL will be conducting a seismic exploration survey offshore Aruba.

- This seismic survey is conducted in fulfillment of a contract between REPSOL and CAP in accordance with articles 3 and 4 of the Petroleum Ordinance offshore Aruba.
- The seismic survey will start the 15th of February 2013 and will have a duration of 40 days approximately.
- The seismic vessel SR/V VANTAGE will tow a submarine cable of 6 – 9 kilometers with a diameter of 6 centimeter at a depth of 8 - 10 meters below sealevel.
- Two support vessels OMS RESOLUTION and ELIZABETH-C will give logistical assistance to the operations during the seismic survey and will maintain communications with other ships in the area.
- All seismic acquisition will be conducted at a distance of more than 3 kilometer from the coast.
- CAP N.V. requests the co-operation of boat owners in order to ensure that the survey is conducted in a safe and proper manner.

CAP
COMPANIA ARUBANO DI PETROLEO

REPSOL

Symbolism of Pope Benedict XVI's final day - Points

VATICAN CITY (AFP) - Pope Benedict XVI's final hours as pontiff on Thursday were rich with symbolism that underlined the historic -- and novel -- nature of his resignation as leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

Here are a few key facts about the historic day:

Bells: The bells of St Peter's Basilica rang out as Benedict left the Vatican for the last time as sovereign of the world's smallest city state and leader of the 1.2-billion strong Catholic Church.

The bell of the Senatorial Palace on the Capitol -- Rome city hall -- rang out as he flew over the Italian capital, officially the pope's diocese.

Last Tweet: The Vatican put out a final tweet on the 85-year-old pope's Twitter account, which is now suspended until a new pope is elected.

Benedict, who made his Twitter debut in December, told his 1.5 million-plus Internet "followers" in English: "Thank you for your love and support."

Last Remarks: Benedict came out onto the balcony of Castel Gandolfo to bid a final goodbye in what was his last public appearance as pontiff.

"I will no longer be pope but a simple pilgrim who is starting out on the last part of his pilgrimage," he said.

Papal Guard: The Swiss Guards shut the imposing doors of Castel Gandolfo and left their posts to mark the exact moment Benedict stepped down.

The guards -- a military corps which dates back to the 15th century -- also changed from their colourful striped regalia into civilian clothes.

Vatican Flag: The Vatican's yellow-and-white flag bearing the papal insignia was lowered over Castel Gandolfo as soon as Benedict was no longer pope.

Seals: Workers applied seals to the doors of the papal apartments in the Vatican in accordance with tradition, as well as to the private lift used to reach the apartments on the third floor of the Apostolic Palace.

Fisherman's Ring: Benedict has entrusted his Fisherman's Ring -- a potent symbol of the papacy that is cast in gold for each new pope -- to the "camerlengo" (chamberlain) cardinal who takes over Church affairs until a new pope is elected.

In a tradition first established to prevent forgeries of papal documents during the interim period known as the Sede Vacante (Vacant See), the camerlengo will score the signet ring with an "X" at the cardinals' first meeting next week.



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2013 Telephone guide cover is of "Quinta del Carmen"



Almost everyone has received their 2013 telephone guide. The cover of the guide portrays a beautiful house in Bubali; the manor with the name "Quinta del Carmen".

A complete story of the

house and its surrounding land can be found on page 5 of the Community Pages section. "Quinta del Carmen" is part of Aruba's national monuments.

The manor belongs to

family Hammers who live in the house.

Recently, representatives of SETAR Marketing Department and Aruba Yellow Pages handed the Hammers family a special edition of the



2013 telephone guide.

Photos show Mrs. Hammers receiving the special 2013 telephone guide from

SETAR executive Mrs. Clem van Heyningen and the cover of the telephone guide.

EU to cap banker bonuses, tighten regulation



BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Union has agreed new rules that will cap bankers' bonuses, blamed by critics for helping to drive the global financial crisis but also defended as crucial for the smooth working of the banking system.

The European Parliament and the EU's current Irish presidency agreed early Thursday how to implement Basel III, an internationally-agreed set of regulations which tighten capital requirements in the hope of preventing any repeat of the 2008 banking collapse.

The accord means that "for the first time in the his-

tory of EU financial market regulation, we will cap bankers' bonuses," said MEP Othmar Karas, the negotiator for the parliament.

Parliament had wanted to limit any bonus to not more than a banker's fixed annual salary but agreed it could be twice the size, on the condition that shareholders formally approved such a payment. In this case, a quarter of the bonus would also be deferred for at least five years.

Bonuses, paid either as cash, shares or both, are very volatile but can be many times a banker's fixed annual

salary, leading to charges they encouraged the risk taking that left the banks over-extended and desperately short of funds in 2008.

Earlier this month for example, Barclays chief Antony Jenkins said he would give up his 2012 bonus -- estimated at 1.0 million pounds (1.2 million euros) -- after the bank was fined for helping rig money market interest rates.

In June, Stephen Hester, the head of Royal Bank of Scotland which was nationalised by the British government to prevent its collapse, waived his bonus for a second year.

Basel III was supposed to have been implemented from January this year but the timetable slipped steadily as the banks and some EU member states, especially Britain, balked at the new rules, saying they would undercut management incentives and make the banks reluctant to lend.

Basel III notably requires the banks to build up their capital buffers and reserves but in doing so, they argue, they have less money left to lend to businesses now struggling in a deep economic slump.

SpaceX set for third mission to space station

WASHINGTON (AFP) - As US firm SpaceX prepares for its third launch to the space station Friday, NASA said there was nothing "particularly challenging" about a mission that a few months ago was unprecedented.

Liftoff is set for 10:10 am local time (1510 GMT) in Cape Canaveral, Florida, to launch the unmanned Dragon capsule into orbit carrying some 1,200 pounds (544 kilograms) of supplies to the International Space Station.

Forecasts give an 80 percent chance of favorable weather conditions.

This is the second of 12 planned trips in NASA's \$1.6 billion contract with SpaceX, the private company owned by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Their successful mission last October was the first ever commercial re-supply operation to the ISS, a milestone for US efforts to reduce costs by privatizing the space industry.

SpaceX had earlier completed a near flawless test flight to the ISS.

As NASA's ISS program manager Mike Suffredini described plans for the latest 25-day mission, he emphasized that the process has become routine.

"This is not a particularly challenging event," Suffredini said of the launch and berthing at a televised pre-launch press conference Thursday.

"This unique vehicle has become a very integral part of how we operate and use the space station," he added.

SpaceX president Gwynne Shotwell, also speaking at the press conference, said the final pieces of cargo and supplies were being loaded for the trip, which was scheduled to take less than 24 hours from launch to berthing.

Among the equipment on board, she added, are two grapple bars that will be transported in an unpressurized compartment of the spacecraft, a first for SpaceX.

Also on board will be equipment for 160 experiments to be conducted by the space station crew, which currently consists of two

Americans, three Russians, and a Canadian.

On the return flight, Dragon -- the only spacecraft able to bring cargo back to Earth for now -- will be loaded with just over a ton of materials, including results of medical research.

The capsule is scheduled for a splashdown landing off the coast of California on March 25.

NASA has bet on SpaceX and other commercial ventures to take over for its fleet of space shuttles, which last flew in July 2011.

Before SpaceX's successful mission in October, NASA had been relying on Russian spacecraft -- but the Soyuz craft does not have room for cargo on the return flight.

SpaceX says it has 50 launches planned -- both NASA missions and commercial flights -- representing about \$4 billion in contracts.



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US Congress passes Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON (AFP) - After months of partisan delay, the US Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act on Thursday, reauthorizing protections from domestic violence and sexual assault for millions of women.

The bill -- a reauthorization of legislation first enacted in 1994 but which includes new protections -- passed the House of Representatives 286-138, with 87 Republicans joining a united Democratic front in support of the legislation.

The Republican-led House had first sought to greenlight a weakened version of VAWA similar to one they passed last year.

But when that failed on Thursday, they turned around and passed the Senate version, which includes expanded protections for Native Americans, gays and undocumented immigrants.

It now goes to the White House for the signature of President Barack Obama, who applauded the bipartisan passage.

"This law has saved countless lives and transformed the way we treat victims of abuse," Obama said in a statement, adding that the bill will also provide "critical support for both international and domestic victims of trafficking."

VAWA funds police training, domestic violence pre-

vention clinics and hotlines, rape prevention programs, shelters for battered women, and help for teens caught in abusive relationships, among other provisions.

A key sticking point for some Republicans had been the bill's introduction of new groups of individuals, a move conservatives said appeared to infringe on the rights of states to determine just where the assistance was to go.

A bill passed by the House last year, months after the Senate's version passed with broad bipartisan approval, stripped out the specific mention of gays, Native Americans and illegal immigrants.

However, the two chambers failed to reconcile their bills, and Republicans stood accused of essentially letting the clock run out on the protections which VAWA supporters say have helped millions of women across the country.

That triggered a backlash from Democrats like Senator Patty Murray, who said last month that "the House Republicans' decision to pointedly discriminate against these groups of women was stunning," and showed how the leadership was pressured by the far right wing of the party into allowing the bill to expire.

According to the White House, domestic violence has dropped by 64 percent since VAWA first came into effect 18 years ago.

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International News

Haiti's Duvalier: life was better with me in power



PORT-AU-PRINCE (AFP) - Former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier angrily defended his rule Thursday at a hearing on whether he can be charged with crimes against humanity.

Duvalier, who came to power as a teen, ruled with an iron fist until being ousted in a popular revolt in 1986 and fled into exile in France, returning just two years ago, tried to turn the tables on today's Haitian rulers.

He said people had in fact lived better under him.

"What have you done with my country?" he asked the judge in a much-delayed session at which he confronted victims of his regime for the first time. His supporters in the courtroom cheered.

Former opposition figures have accused Duvalier of deploying the feared Tonton Macoute militia and of complicity in murder, torture and kidnapping.

The issue at stake in Thursday's hearing was whether the statute of limitations on the alleged human rights abuses has expired.

Duvalier, 61, said on Thursday that when he was president, Haitians were indeed impoverished but things more or less limped along "and

Haitians sent their children to school."

Duvalier spoke so softly to Judge Jean-Joseph Lebrun that a court clerk had to repeat his words so everyone else could hear them. The judge had asked him if he assumed responsibility for his actions as president.

Duvalier said he had done his best to give the people of the western hemisphere's poorest country a decent life.

The judge at one point told Duvalier he was accused of ordering illegal arrests, torture and political killings.

"How do you answer?" the judge asked.

Duvalier said: "Each time cases were reported, I intervened so that justice was rendered."

Human rights groups, such as Human Rights Watch, expressed satisfaction that Duvalier was finally in court.

Victims of his regime were in the courtroom, and were to testify later.

A Haitian court decided last year that too much time had passed for Duvalier to be charged with crimes against humanity, which are protected by a statute of limitations. His alleged victims have appealed that decision.

US pledges first direct aid to Syria rebel fighters

ROME (AFP) - The United States said on Thursday it would for the first time provide direct aid to Syrian rebels, but not the arms they had hoped for, as well as \$60 million in extra assistance to the political opposition.

After talks with European and Arab partners and the opposition National Coalition in Rome, Secretary of State John Kerry said the United States would provide aid to fighters in the form of food and medical assistance.

The move was a significant shift in US policy but fell short of rebel demands for Western backers to supply the rebellion with weapons or non-offensive military equipment, such as vehicles and body armour.

Coalition chief Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib, who stood beside Kerry as he made the announcement, expressed disappointment, suggesting the West was overly focused on the presence of Islamists among rebels.

He also complained about weapons continuing to reach the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Kerry said that, "for more than a year, the United States and our partners have called on Assad to heed the voice of the Syrian people and to halt his war machine. Instead, what we have seen is his brutality increase."

The goal was to give the opposition the means to control areas it has seized from the

regime, to prove to Assad he can't "shoot his way out" of the conflict.

"Working together, we've already been able to do a lot... but today, President Obama has encouraged all of us to embrace the notion that we need to do more."

Kerry said the \$60 million would strengthen the Coalition's organisational capacity, and help war-torn communities with respect to sanitation, food delivery, public order, education and medical care.

Soon after Kerry's announcement, the Coalition indefinitely postponed a meeting that was to have been held in Istanbul on Saturday to elect a premier and government for "liberated areas" of Syria.

WikiLeaks: Manning says wanted 'public debate' on war

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US Army private Bradley Manning told a military tribunal on Thursday that he leaked secret files on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to WikiLeaks in order to start a "public debate."

Speaking in a firm and assured voice to read a nearly-hour-long statement, Manning said that when he deployed to Iraq he found himself alienated from his comrades and at odds with an army that "seemed not to value human life".

The 25-year-old, who is being held in military custody pending trial, said he would plead guilty to ten of the less serious of the 22 charges against him, but would deny aiding America's enemies, a crime which carries a life term.

Even if the court agrees to pursue only the lesser allegations, Manning still faces 20 years in military custody for leaking classified material to Australian activist Julian Assange's WikiLeaks whistle-

blower website.

Reading a statement to the tribunal, Manning said he had initially attempted to contact traditional media outlets -- the Washington Post, the New York Times and Politico -- before deciding to pass the documents to WikiLeaks.

He sent the organization, which campaigns against government secrecy and publishes leaked information on a secure website, two military logs of daily incidents during the US campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Manning said he had chosen to work with WikiLeaks as it seemed to him, from what he had read, that the group "exposed illegal activities and corruption" and was "almost academic in nature."

But he said he never aimed to put US policy or US personnel in danger.

Manning presented himself during the nearly-hour-long statement as a young soldier interested in "geopolitical matters and information technology."

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Health & Living

Young US blacks see lives shattered by gun violence

WASHINGTON (AFP) - In 1998, Ismael Watkins was walking down a street when a bullet hit him in the neck. He never took another step.

Today, the 33-year-old relies on a wheelchair to get around and still remembers those life-changing moments as if they had happened yesterday.

"I heard the shot, it hit my neck, another grazed my neck," Watkins told AFP, sharing how, at age 18, he had just become a father when his fate took a turn for the worse.

Watkins' story is by no means unique. Every year, hundreds of young African Americans are wounded or killed by weapons in the United States.

According to a 2012 report by the Children's Defense Fund, gun homicide was the leading cause of death for young blacks aged 15 to 19 and they were eight times as likely to be victims than their white counterparts.

Since 1979, 44,038 black children and teenagers were killed by guns, nearly 13 times more than the number of recorded lynchings of blacks of all ages from 1882 to 1968, according to the group.

Recently, the fatal shooting of a young African American girl in Chicago just days after she performed at President Barack Obama's January inauguration put a particularly poignant face on the issue, further fueling a political debate about how best to reduce arms-related killings in the United States.

Watkins gains strength by attending support group meetings every Tuesday at Washington's MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital.

Others in the Urban Re-Entry Group -- all "individuals

with violently acquired disabilities" -- have similar stories to tell.

Among them is Kwame Dew, 38, who was leaving a club one night 13 years ago when he was gunned down.

"All I remember is... (I) blanked out, then I'm in a hospital, couldn't talk, could do nothing," he said.

Corie Davis meanwhile became a quadriplegic when, on August 30, 1999, a stranger lodged a bullet in his neck.

"I actually don't know the person who shot me," said the now 33-year-old. "I have always thought I was at the wrong place at the wrong time."

To David Cole, a law professor at Georgetown University, the plight of people like Watkins and his fellow support

group members sheds light on the true face of gun violence in America, where the constitution guarantees everyone the right to bear arms.

While the focus of the public is on mass shootings such as the December massacre at a Connecticut elementary school that claimed 26 lives, in addition to those of the gunman and his mother, "that's not the reality of gun violence in the United States," Cole said.

"The reality is concentrated in the inner cities, among the poor, and the victims are overwhelmingly young black men and Hispanics," he said. "The reality of the right to bear arms in the United States is a young black kid scared with a gun in a back alley shooting at another young black kid (who is) equally scared."



TOKYO (AFP) - A 114-year-old Japanese woman was recognised as the world's oldest female, making the Asian nation home to the longest-living woman and man on the planet. Misao Okawa, a descendant of kimono merchants in the city Osaka, said she was "very happy" at receiving the honour -- and a certificate to prove her longevity -- from Guinness World Records. Okawa was born on March 5, 1898 and married in 1919. She had three children, two of whom -- a son and a daughter -- are still alive and in their 90s, Japanese media reported. The centenarian, who has four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, reportedly never had any major health problems but broke her leg at a comparatively young 102 years old.

Newborns of obese mums set for heart problems: study

PARIS (AFP) - Newborn babies of overweight or obese mothers have a thickening of the aorta, something that in later life is linked to heart disease, a small Australian study said.

The arterial thickening occurred regardless of the child's weight at birth, according to the paper, published in a specialist edition of the journal Archives of Disease in Childhood.

Doctors in Melbourne asked 23 expectant mothers to take part in the investigation.

The women's body mass was measured, and within seven days of birth, the doctors measured the baby's abdominal aorta, the body's main artery, using ultrasound.

Women who were over-

weight or obese -- defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or more -- were likelier to give birth to a baby whose aorta wall was thicker (0.06 of a millimetre, 0.02 of an inch) than that of newborns whose mothers were a healthy weight.

The higher the woman's weight, the thicker the wall.

Aorta thickness is considered a benchmark for potential artery clogging.

The findings suggest a mother's weight could affect the risk of cardiovascular disease in her child in later life, said the study.

But further work is needed to explore this suspicion, it added.

Alleged rape victim in Maldives to be flogged

MALE (AFP) - A Maldives court has sentenced a 15-year-old alleged rape victim to 100 lashes and eight months under house arrest after she admitted having had premarital sex in a separate incident.

During a police probe into allegations that the girl had been raped by her stepfather, investigators uncovered evidence that she had had consensual sex with another man.

"Though she has been sentenced she will be lashed once she turns 18," the court official, who asked not to be named, told AFP. "But the sentence will be enforced immediately if she wants it to be carried out now."

Premarital sex is illegal under the Indian Ocean nation's strict Islamic law.

The child's stepfather faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted of rape and a murder charge, after he allegedly killed a baby which resulted

from his alleged rape of his stepdaughter.

The premarital sex charge against the teenager has been condemned by rights groups and the government has urged leniency towards the girl, saying she had been traumatised by the repeated rapes by her stepfather.

President Mohamed Waheed's spokesman Masood Imad told AFP that the teenager should be treated as a victim rather than a perpetrator of a crime, but clarified that she should nevertheless "feel the shame" for her offence.

"She is not going to be lashed to cause her pain... rather, it is for her to feel the shame for having engaged in activity forbidden by the religion," Imad said in a phone interview.

It was unclear if the girl's male partner would also be charged with having premarital sex.

Sci-Tech

The next big smartphone accessory: your car



Volvo shows off smooth, snappy touchscreen infotainment system

BARCELONA (AFP) - Automobile giants at the world's biggest mobile fair are showing off a new technology that turns a car into a smartphone accessory, allowing a driver to use cutting-edge apps without veering off the road.

Called MirrorLink, and adopted by 85 big manufacturers from Ford to General Motors, Chrysler, Nissan, Honda, Hyundai, BMW, VW, Fiat or Renault, it connects a smartphone and car entertainment system with a two-way audio, video and data link.

MirrorLink requires a compliant car entertainment system and a smartphone with the software, which can be downloaded.

Drivers then can access their favourite apps.

The apps must meet legal requirements for screens that face drivers, for example the text must be a certain size and some functions such as typing must be disabled while the car is moving.

Eventually, the MirrorLink technology will feed other data from the car to the smartphone, such as speed, location and even weather. That information can be used to develop new applications or improve other services, such as traffic news.

The Car Connectivity Forum, which groups nearly all car manufacturers, was set up to develop the technology two years ago.

The first MirrorLink compliant car entertainment systems have been released by the likes of Sony and JVC, for installation into existing vehicles.

The next step will be for manufacturers to build them into cars before sale.

The new technology avoids problems posed by the "smart car" in which manufacturers weld a SIM card into a vehicle so as to offer driver services such as navigation, SOS response and door unlocking, as well as paid-for entertainment.

One challenge is that the SIM card built into the car ties the owner to one operator for the car's life -- up to 15 years. To overcome this, car makers are trying to agree on a standard way to program the SIM card by remote.

General Motors, one of the leaders in the field with its OnStar service offering navigation and help for drivers, announced before the show it will embed 4G connectivity in all 2015 model cars in North America.

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Mobile phones to match globe's population in 2014: UN

GENEVA (AFP) - The number of mobile telephones worldwide is set to catch up to the globe's population next year, the United Nations' telecommunications agency said Thursday.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) said mobile subscriber numbers looked set to top seven billion in 2014.

"More than half of all mobile subscriptions are now in Asia, which remains the powerhouse of market growth," the ITU said.

By the end of 2013, overall mobile penetration rates will have reached 96 percent globally, 128 percent in the developed world, and 89 percent in developing countries, it added.

"Near-ubiquitous mobile penetration makes mobile cellular the ideal platform for service delivery in developing

countries," said Brahim Sanou, director of the ITU's telecommunication development bureau.

The ITU also forecast that 2.7 billion people, or 39 percent of the world's population, would be using the Internet by the end of this year.

Europe will remain the world's most connected region, with 75 percent Internet penetration, far outpacing the Asia-Pacific region at 32 percent, and Africa with 16 percent, it said.

"Household Internet penetration -- often considered the most important measure of Internet access -- continues to rise. By end 2013, ITU estimates that 41 percent of the world's households will be connected to the Internet," the agency noted.

Over the past four years, household access has grown

fastest in Africa, with an annual growth rate of 27 percent, it said.

But despite a positive general trend, 90 percent of the 1.1 billion households around the world that are still unconnected are in the developing world.

It also highlighted disparities in the field of broadband Internet.

It said the star performers in terms of access speeds were South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan, alongside some surprises in Europe, including Bulgaria, Iceland and Portugal.

The cost of fixed-broadband services has dropped precipitously over the past five years, declining by 82 percent if measured as a share of gross national income per capita, it said.

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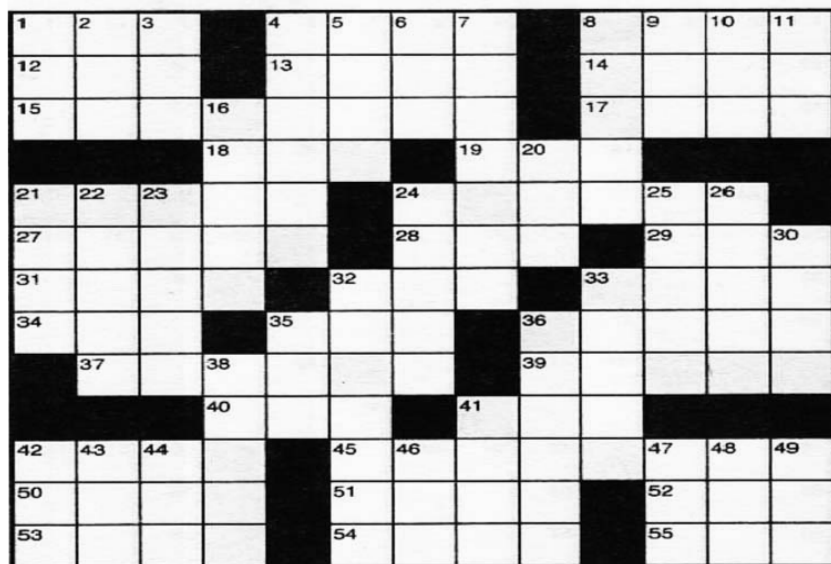
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ACROSS

1. Supped
4. Me, myself, ____ (2 wds.)
8. Autos made in Munich
12. Edison's inits.
13. Oz creator L. Frank ____
14. Public disorder
15. Temple's "Good Ship"
17. Cutting tools
18. Actress Lupino
19. Judge's field
21. Alan Ladd role (abbr.)
24. Begin
27. Places for earrings
28. Liverpool's locale (abbr.)
29. English fliers (abbr.)
31. Roadhouses
32. Tabby
33. Inca country
34. Eisenhower's inits.
35. Fourth-yr. students
36. Makes gentle
37. Temperature-taking spot
39. Pieces
40. Edible grain
41. Flight height

DOWN

1. One ocean (abbr.)
2. Eastern "truth"
3. "Electric" fish
4. Remains
5. Wine valley
6. Twosome
7. Silicone treatment
8. Strength
9. Blend
10. Suffering
11. Holy ones (abbr.)
16. Telephone wires
20. Mo. with no holidays
21. Slipped
22. Car company
23. "Li'l ____"
24. Smallest in importance
25. Oreo filler
26. Sultan's wives
30. Throw a tantrum
32. Movie reviewers
33. Broadway's LuPone
35. Sauna setting
36. Plowed
38. Internet need
41. The very best (2 wds.)
42. "Hush!"
43. "The Raven" poet
44. Angled annex
46. Bambi's mom
47. Use a microwave, informally
48. Listening locale
49. Verbalize



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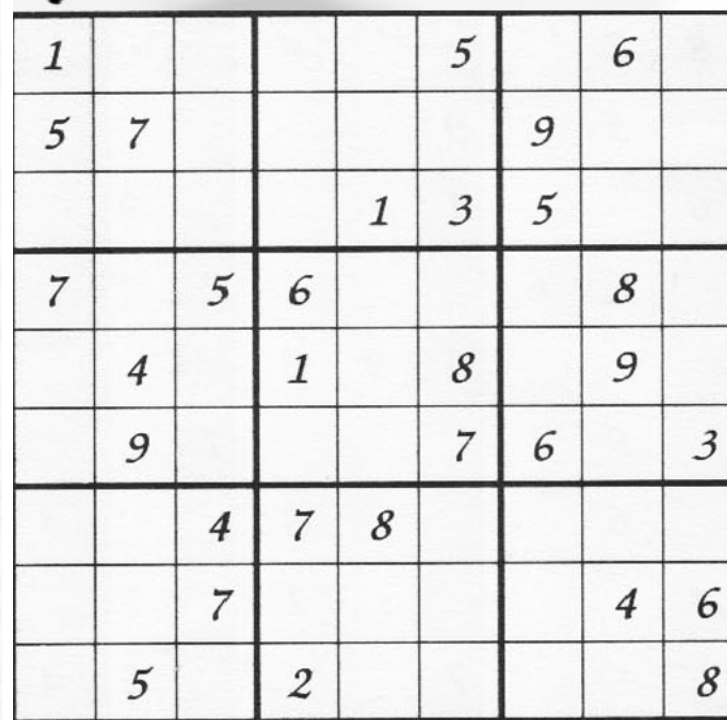
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Horacio Oduber Hospital
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

8	4	1	6	2	1	5	9	
9	7	1	5	8	6			
6	5	1	9	8	7	4	2	
5	1	9	7	4	2	6	8	
5	6	7	8	2	1	9	4	3
2	8	7	6	5	9	3	1	4
4	2	5	1	8	6	9	7	3
1	5	6	2	9	7	8	4	3
7	9	8	5	4	6	3	1	2

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

Bills to replace sequester cuts fail in US Senate

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Two competing bills aimed at averting huge spending cuts failed Thursday in the US Senate, including a Republican effort that would have ceded authority to the White House to implement the reductions.

Both bills fell short of the 60 votes needed to advance, virtually assuring that the \$85 billion in indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts known as the sequester will kick in after the Friday deadline.

With Democratic and Republican leaders opposed to each other's plans there was little chance from the start that either bill would pass the Senate.

Democrats want to raise new revenue by closing tax loopholes for the rich -- to replace about half the mandated cuts --

accompanied by targeted reductions.

The Republican plan would seek no new tax revenue, but would give Obama broad "flexibility" to determine where the budget ax would fall within different agencies of the government.

Democrats accused Republicans of sitting on their hands in the hopes that the spending cuts actually kick in.

Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer said Republicans were "dancing in the streets, happy with the thought that sequestration will happen."

Attention now turns to the Friday meeting that Obama has called with congressional leaders, and to next month's negotiations over funding for government operations for fiscal year 2013.

cal year 2013.

Despite the foregone conclusion of the votes, Republican Senator Chuck Grassley expressed his frustration at the chamber's inability to avert a crisis long in the making.

"You could have predicted this cliff 18 months ago," he told AFP. "You wait until the last day to bring things up over here? Where does the fault lie?"

Republican House Speaker John Boehner called the Senate performance "embarrassing."

The sequester was baked into law in 2011, when the White House and Republican leaders agreed on wide-ranging cuts designed to be so painful that they would force lawmakers to reach a more palatable compromise to rein in the massive debt.

Asia has the world's most billionaires: survey

BEIJING (AFP) - Asia has more billionaires than any other continent, followed by North America and Europe, according to a survey by a China-based wealth magazine.

There were 1,453 people around the world with a personal wealth of \$1 billion or more as of January, said the Hurun Report, a luxury magazine publisher that compiled the list.

Asia had 608 billionaires, North America 440 and Europe 324, it said in a statement.

Among individual countries, the United States and China dominated with 408 and 317 citizens respectively on the list, followed by Russia, Germany and India.

Mexican telecoms czar Carlos Slim, 73, was ranked as the "Richest Man on the Planet" with a personal fortune of \$66 billion. Slim also topped the Forbes magazine annual global rich list last year.

US investor Warren Buffett and Amancio Ortega of Spain,

founder of fashion brand Zara, were second and third in the Hurun Report list with net worth of \$58 billion and \$55 billion respectively.

It estimated the total wealth of the world's dollar billionaires at \$5.5 trillion, roughly the size of the Japanese economy last year.

"This past year has seen a rebound in the wealth of the private sector," it said, adding the net assets of the 10 richest people on the list rose 22 percent over the year, or \$250 million a day.

Real estate, telecommunications, media and technology and retail were the most common sources of wealth, it added.

Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman and chief researcher of the Hurun Report, said the true number of billionaires in the world could be three times higher as some super-rich hid their worth.

Hoogewerf, an accountant by training, previously compiled the Forbes rich list.

Dutch deficit to exceed eurozone norm until 2014: official

THE HAGUE (AFP) - The Netherlands' deficit will exceed the eurozone three-percent threshold until 2014, an official forecast said Thursday, with the centre-right coalition government not expected to take further austerity measures in 2013.

The Dutch deficit will be 3.3 percent this year and 3.4 percent in 2014, according to the Central Statistic Bureau's (CBS) deficit prediction, used by the government to plan its budget. It hit 4.0 percent in 2012.

"These figures are not good," Liberal Prime Minister Mark Rutte told Dutch public

television. "They confirm what we've known for some time, that the country is going through a very difficult period."

Rutte nevertheless noted that the CBS predicted the Dutch economy would return to growth in 2014, increasing by 1.0 percent of gross domestic product, after a contraction of 0.5 percent in 2013.

Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem, also the head of the Eurogroup, last year refused to speculate on possible further austerity measures as it became clear the deficit would exceed the discipline-driven European norm.

The head of the Labour party faction in parliament Diederik Samsom said it "would not be reasonable" to take further austerity measures, given the need to stimulate the Dutch economy.

Dijsselbloem has been holding talks with opposition parties on whether they would back possible austerity measures to be taken in 2014, including raising taxes and further budget cuts, to lower the deficit to below three percent.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	L	T	S	H	E	E	T	M	E	W
F	O	R	A	U	T	R	Y	I	R	K
T	B	A	U	N	C	A	P	M	I	S
V	A	T	S	E	P	I	C			
C	R	E	M	E	R	U	D	E		
R	E	L	I	E	V	E	S	P	R	O
A	B	E	D	I	N	E	D	E	P	A
B	A	R	A	S	T	R	E	U	S	E
X	M	A	S	S	P	E	N	T		
T	H	E	E	L	I	S	A			
N	E	A	D	E	F	O	G	T	A	B
A	N	N	A	S	I	A	N	E	W	E
T	D	S	L	E	N	D	S	D	E	E

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Brickell Bay Sand Beach lounge featuring live music this Sunday



--Aruba's newest lounge, Brickell Bay Sand Beach, in Palm Beach, created quite a stir with its recent opening, revealing a chic, unique environment that has strongly attracted island fashionistas as a relaxed, elegant place to



while away the evening hours.

The new eatery/nightclub has live music twice weekly, and this Sunday will feature one of the island's most popular and dynamic entertainers of the last decade, Marisela and the Aquarius Band. She is back on Aruba for a limited engagement and will be appearing every Sun-

day through January at Brickell Bay Sand Beach Lounge.

Marisela will be heating up Palm Beach for a very cool night each weekend beginning this Sunday, January 6, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. This is a performer known for "bringing down the house," so don't miss this rare opportunity to enjoy some great entertainment and discover Aruba's most stylish new nightspot.



Every Wednesday, The Ryders will be rockin' the house from 9:00 PM until midnight. Enjoy two for one drinks on all brands, even premium, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM every Monday through Thursday, and from 5:00 to 7:00 PM on Friday and Saturday, with an additional late night "Happy

Hour" on the weekends from 10:00 to 11:00 PM.

Brickell Bay Sand Beach lounge is located directly across the street from the South Beach Center. If you are wondering what is new and hip on Aruba, this is it!

Pope arrives at Castel Gandolfo to begin retirement



CASTEL GANDOLFO (AFP) - Pope Benedict XVI's final goodbye before he retires was met with tears and applause in the tiny hilltop town of Castel Gandolfo near Rome Thursday, where thousands had gathered to hear his emotional last words.

"Thank you, thank you for your friendship," the 85-year old pontiff said as he stepped out onto a balcony of the papal residence here, smiling widely and holding out his arms to the crowd of flag-waving families, priests and pilgrims, who cheered wildly and chanted "Be-ne-detto!"

Cathedral bells rang out to announce the arrival of the soon-to-be former pope, as local residents crowded onto balconies and rooftops surrounding the square of this mediaeval town, which has a bond with the papacy going back centuries, where locals have grown to know and love Benedict.

After waiting for hours in the chill wind, chanting Hail Marys and huddling together for warmth, the crowd gazed eagerly up into the sky to catch a glimpse of the papal helicopter arriving from the Vatican, which Benedict left just minutes earlier for the last time as pope.

Others could be seen tear-

ing up as the pontiff told the crowd he was soon to be just "a simple pilgrim" like them, before blessing them and retiring into the palace, and out of sight from the world.

Benedict will spend the first two months of his retirement here in the papal summer residence perched high on a rocky outcrop with views of a lake and the sea, before withdrawing to a monastery within the grounds of the Vatican.

"It's a place he's come to love, an oasis of calm," Monachesi said, pointing to Benedict's phrase immortalised in a plaque on the town hall opposite the palace.

It reads: "Here I find everything: a mountain, a lake, I even see the sea... and good people."



Castel Gandolfo

US singer Anastacia cancels Europe tour due to cancer



VIENNA (AFP) - US pop singer Anastacia has announced she is cancelling her "It's A Man's World" European tour after being diagnosed for the second time with breast cancer.

"Anastacia has sadly been diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time after having successfully survived her 2003 battle with the disease," a statement on the singer's Facebook page said Thursday.

"Consequently she has been forced to cancel all performances, tours and any travel from now until further notice."

The LS agency organising her concert in Austria mean-

while confirmed the April 20 date in Vienna had also been cancelled.

Anastacia, 44, is best known for her chart-topping hits "One Day in Your Life," "I'm Outta Love" and "Left Outside Alone."

"I feel so awful to be letting down all my amazing fans who were looking forward to 'It's A Man's World Tour'. It just breaks my heart to disappoint them," the 44-year-old said in her statement, adding she hoped to plan a new tour soon.

All tickets for the "It's A Man's World" tour, which was due to kick off in London on April 6, can be refunded.

5 Burgers Aruba: Now your best breakfast bargain!



--A favorite stop for a great burger for lunch or dinner has just expanded their hours and menu to offer some of the best breakfast bargains to be found in Palm Beach. Owners Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. The couple's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu from an inter-

nationally known franchise with a "5", which now includes breakfast.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," believes Aaron. Upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy,

made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

However, beginning at 7 a.m., patrons can now order 2 eggs any style, (omelets with 3 fillings are \$7.99) toast and coffee with unlimited refills for the special introductory price of only \$4.49, (\$5.48, with bacon) or All-you-can-eat pancakes, for \$6.99, again, with free refills on fresh coffee. Breakfast is served until 11 a.m. Famous for their fries made from fresh potatoes, Aaron has been working for months on devising the most irresistible home fries recipe, chunky and tender with skins still on; after much testing and tasting, he got the thumbs up from his harshest critic, Rosie; so this is another treat you have to try.

A glance at their burger menu will certainly tempt you to return for lunch or dinner, to sample their famous specialty items such as the Gouda,



Farmer's or Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with Aarons' secret-recipe crispy onion rings. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jala-peño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato...whatever, the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of

fries is enough to be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!"

Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

5 Burgers is now open early until 10-ish at night; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district at now extra cost for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for either owner to sit and chat, sharing their knowledge of the island while making sure patrons are happy with their meal.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

-- Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by



the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community

of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facili-

ties such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the

least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

Sport

Formula One: Webber fastest in wet Barcelona test

BARCELONA (AFP) - Australia's Mark Webber clocked the best time of the day at a rain-swept Barcelona as the final pre-season test of the winter endured a soggy start on Thursday.

The Red Bull driver timed 1min 22.693sec in the afternoon session after the morning action saw drivers tentatively tackle a Catalunya circuit made treacherous by heavy rain.

Former world champion Lewis Hamilton had been quickest in the morning but even his 1min 41.614sec, off a modest total of 43 laps in his Mercedes, was a long way off the times set at the same circuit last week.

Hamilton eventually put in 113 laps, the most of any driver and improved his time to 1min 24.348 in the afternoon with France's Jean-Eric Vergne, in a Toro Rosso, the third fastest in 1:25.017.

Hamilton has now completed 2,040km over five days of winter testing, equivalent to nearly seven Grand Prix distances.

Meanwhile, Force India confirmed Adrian Sutil will drive for them in the new season, signalling a return for the German after a 12-month absence.

Sutil and Scotland's Paul di Resta will now be the team's drivers for the 2013 Grand Prix season, as they were in 2011.

Winter testing in Barcelona will conclude on Saturday ahead of the season's opening Grand Prix in Australia on March 17.

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Football: Madrid-United clash 'pure football' - Alonso

MADRID (AFP) - Xabi Alonso has described Real Madrid's decisive clash with Manchester United at Old Trafford next week as "pure football."

The ex-Liverpool man will be joined by former United favourite Cristiano Ronaldo as the Spanish champions try to overcome a disappointing 1-1 draw at the Santiago Bernabeu in the first-leg between the two in their quest for a 10th European title.

"From the fans' point of view and because of the history of both clubs, this meeting is pure football," he told Champions Matchday magazine.

"For Cristiano, who wore the United shirt for many years, it is something even more special. It is for me too."

"When I played for Liverpool the games against United were very intense and important due to the rivalry that ex-

isted between the clubs.

"We know it is now a few years since Real Madrid won its last European title, but it is not easy to win this competition because we are facing the best teams in Europe."

"It doesn't have to become an obsession because this doesn't help, but yes it is an important objective."

All eyes will be on Ronaldo as quite apart from his United past, the visitors' chances of progression would appear to rest on the Portuguese's broad shoulders and Alonso is confident that the man who has already scored 43 times this season will find the target again at his old stomping ground.

He is one of the most ambitious players I have known, he has great desire and wants to score a goal in every game.

"His physical capacity and technique is incredible. He is a complete player. He has a tremendous shot, he knows how to beat an opponent in one-on-one situations and how to find space and take advantage of it."

Tennis: Djokovic, Federer into Dubai semi-finals

DUBAI (AFP) - Roger Federer earned himself a chance of revenge for his most disappointing defeat of 2012 by carrying the defence of his Dubai Open title impressively into the semi-finals on Thursday.

The five-time champion's 6-2, 6-2 win over Nikolay Davydenko earned him a semi-final with Tomas Berdych, the dangerously flat-hitting Czech who halted Federer in the quarter-finals of the US Open in 2012.

The super-fast success also brought Federer within one win of a likely showdown with world number one Novak Djokovic, who hopes to mark his first tournament since retaining the Australian Open title by regaining the Dubai title.

Djokovic had earlier extended his unbeaten sequence this year to 11 with a trampling 6-0, 6-3 success over Andreas Seppi which suggested that he will be very hard to stop.

But Federer was on a roll too. His serve was in tremendous form, he moved with relaxed authority, and he made some surprising ambushes at the net.

The loss of only eight points on serve against Davydenko was a remarkable statistic against a player who is no longer quite at his peak but who remains one of the best returners and most eye-catching ground stroke hitters in the game.

From the moment Federer achieved his third break, early in the second set, the outcome was already clear, and the only doubt was how long it would take.

The answer was only 54 minutes -- 10 minutes quicker than Djokovic's romping success.

Berdych, the world number six, has continued to cope well with a schedule requiring him to travel 3,000 miles from Marseille where he contested the final on Sunday.

There he beat Dmitry Turunov 6-2, 6-1 in the semis.

Now he beat the Russian wild card entry again, just as solidly, by 6-3, 6-2. Berdych also looked more comfortable than earlier during this week.

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NBA: Suns stun Spurs in overtime, Knicks beat Warriors

SAN ANTONIO (AFP) - The Phoenix Suns made just two baskets from the floor in overtime, but it was enough to lift them to a 105-101 upset triumph over the San Antonio Spurs.

The Spurs, returning home after a nine-game road trip, saw their 18-game home winning streak snapped.

The Suns' Wesley Johnson drained a three-pointer at the buzzer in regulation to force overtime and Marcin Gortat tipped in the go-ahead basket with 1:07 in the extra period to help lift Phoenix.

The Spurs, an NBA-leading 22-2 at home coming into the contest, missed all 10 of their field-goal attempts in overtime as they fell at home for the first time since a loss to the Los Angeles Clippers on November 19.

While in New York The



Knicks withstood a dazzling 54-point display from Golden State's Stephen Curry on Wednesday to post a 109-105 NBA victory over the Warriors at Madison Square Garden.

Curry's points total was the highest in the league this season, surpassing the 52 of Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant against Dallas last month.

But his individual effort was not enough against a Knicks team that received 35 points from Carmelo Anthony and 26 off the bench from JR Smith.

Tyson Chandler contributed 16 points for New York and grabbed a career-best 28 rebounds.

Curry and the Warriors nearly claimed the victory despite the absence of David Lee, serving a one-game suspension for his role in an altercation with the Pacers' Roy Hibbert at Indiana on Tuesday that included several players and saw the shoving match spill into the spectator area behind the basket.

Curry made 11 of his 13 attempts from three-point range, one short of the league single-game record. He added seven assists and six rebounds.

Carl Landry scored 15

points and Jarrett Jack chipped in 14 for the Warriors.

Curry became the first player to score at least 50 points at Madison Square Garden since LeBron James did it with the Cavaliers in 2009.

He scored or assisted on Golden State's last 20 points. By then the New York crowd was cheering him, but the Knicks held the Warriors scoreless for the last two minutes of the contest.

After Raymond Felton denied Curry's jump shot with 1:28 remaining and the score knotted at 105-105, New York's Smith made a jump shot that gave the Knicks the lead for good.

Kim Jong-Un, Rodman watch basketball game



BEIJING (AFP) - In a dispatch from Pyongyang, China's official Xinhua news agency said that the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un watched a basketball game with former Chicago Bulls' star Dennis Rodman on Thursday. Nicknamed "The Worm" and famed for his changing hair colour, Rodman landed in the isolated state this week with tensions high following the North's third nuclear test earlier in February. He arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday with members of the Globetrotters on a goodwill visit to engage in "basketball diplomacy". The game consisted of 12 players from North Korea and four Globetrotters divided up into two teams.

Boxing: Unbeaten Ugandan faces Cuba's Abril for crown



LAS VEGAS (AFP) - Undeclared Ugandan Sharif Bogere "The Lion" has his first chance to fight for a world title on Saturday when he faces Cuba's Richar Abril for the World Boxing Association lightweight title.

Bogere, 23-0 with 15 knockouts, has not gone past the third round in his past three fights, the most recent a second-round knockout of Mexi-

can southpaw Manuel Leyva last June.

"I have been waiting my whole life for this chance. Fighting for the WBA title is an opportunity of a lifetime," said the 24-year-old African.

"Uganda is one of the poorest countries on the planet. Most people don't know how hard it's been to get from where I started to where I'm at now. I'm confident that after

Saturday, people will know my name and know who I am."

Abril, 17-3 with one draw and eight knockouts, has not fought since losing a split decision to unbeaten American Brandon Rios last April.

Rios, 30, failed to make weight for the fight and moved up, leaving the title open until the WBA named interim Abril the full champion ahead of the Bogere bout at Las Vegas.

"I had no idea it was happening. It was definitely a surprise, but it was a great surprise," Abril said. "Every fighter has aspirations of becoming a world champion."

"Anybody who watched absolutely knows I beat Brandon Rios and that I deserved the decision. Ever since then, in my heart, I always considered myself the WBA champion. The WBA only made it official."

Bogere, however, will make him earn his throne in the ring.

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Qualifying competition for swimmers



-- Last weekend the Aruba Swimming Federation held their last qualifying swimming competitions at the Roly Bisslik Olympic Pool. This was the last chance for swimmers to qualify for CONSANAT -Confederación

Sudamericana de Natación, (the South American Swimming Confederation, which oversees international aquatics competitions among South American countries) and CARIFTA (the Caribbean

Free Trade Association) an annual junior track and field championship meet organized among the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean and the French and Dutch Antilles.

The event was held for athletes of all ages, although CONSANAT is only for ages 13-14 and 15-17 categories and CARIFTA in the 11-12, 13-14, and 15-17 categories.

Arends and Tyreke Wernet qualified, and, together with Rebecca Maduro, Allyson and Gabrielle Ponson, Daniella van den Berg, Mikel Schreuders and Jordy Groters, they will represent Aruba in the Campeonato Suramericano competition to be held in Chile from March 14-17.

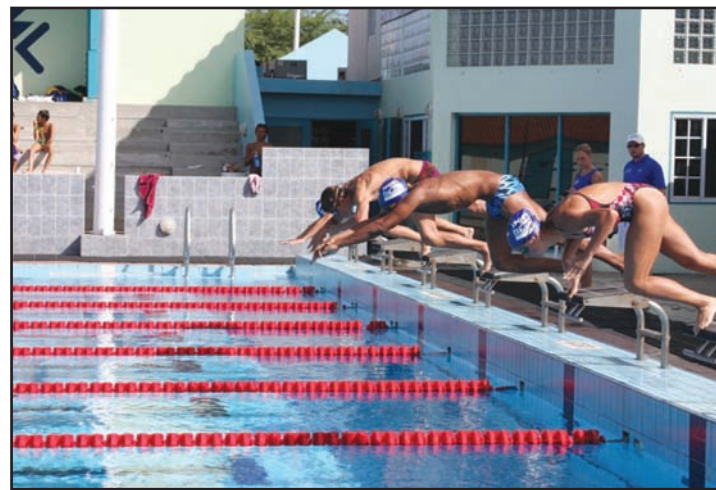
Those who qualified for CARIFTA are:

11-12 years:

Brandon Cheong, Keyshawn Godet, Daniel Jacobs, Flory Kock, Keeley Maduro, Anahi Schreuders, Elisabeth Timmers, Alejandro Timp.

13-14 years:

Ginayla Arends, Andrea van den Berg, George den Dunnen, Lizanne Kelly, Patrick Groters, Rebecca



Maduro, Junice Martin, Edward Mulder, Mikel Schreuders, Tyreke Wernet, Joseph Winterdal.

15-17 years:

Daniella van den Berg, Jordy Groters, Cindy

Maduro, Allyson Ponson, Gabrielle Ponson, Marc Willems.

They will represent Aruba at the CARIFTA championships in Jamaica, also in March.



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